

## Claims

What is claimed is

1. A computer-based method for the improvement of business planning procedures, including a planning data repository with a fact table, one or more related dimension tables, and relationships for accessing data from the fact table through the related dimension tables, the method comprising:
  - a modeling step to create a planning cube and set up relationships between users and data; and
  - a using step to delegate planning and coordinate the passing of data.
2. The computer-based method of claim 1 wherein:

the modeling step comprises the following steps:

- a) defining one or more dimensions describing the structure of an enterprise;
- b) defining one or more user classes;
- c) mapping said user classes to the levels in the structures identified by said one or more dimensions to produce an organisation object;
- d) creating a cube from said planning data repository; and
- e) creating a plan from said cube, thereby assigning ownership;

and the using step comprises the following steps:

for each contributing manager or contributor as identified by said organisation object:

- f) delegating said plan by a superior manager, who may be a plan manager or contributing manager, to a delegated contributing manager or a contributor;
- g) incorporating changes generated by said delegated contributing manager or said contributor to data within said plan thereby creating a proposal;
- h) passing by said delegated contributing manager or said contributor of said proposal to said superior manager; and

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i) accepting or rejecting by said superior manager of said proposal.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the planning data repository comprises a number of overlapping and complementary sub-plans of data.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein in the using step, the delegated contributing manager or contributor generate more than one proposal and pass them to a superior manager and said superior manager selects one of said proposals for incorporation in their proposal.

5. The method of claim 2 wherein following the step e) is introduced the step of:

- binding said organisation object to said plan created from a planning data repository, thereby creating a delegation object;

and the passing step h) incorporates the following step:

- validating said proposal using a delegation object to ensure it is compatible with intersecting sub-plans within said planning data repository

6. The method of claim 2 wherein within the step i):

- the accepting of said proposal is followed by the step of including said proposal in said superior manager's proposal; and
- the rejecting of said proposal is followed by the step of sending said proposal back to said delegated contributing manager or contributor for further consideration.

7. The method of claim 2 wherein the steps b) and c) are repeated to define more than one organisation object, and following the step e) is introduced the step of binding each of said organisation objects to said plans created from a planning data repository, thereby creating a number of delegation objects;

8. A computer-based method for the improvement of business planning procedures, including a planning data repository with a fact table, one or more related dimension

tables, and relationships for accessing data from the fact table through the related dimension tables, the method comprising a modeling step and a using step, wherein

the modeling step comprises the following steps:

- a) defining one or more dimensions describing the structure of an enterprise;
- b) defining one or more user classes;
- c) mapping said user classes to the levels in the structures identified by said one or more dimensions to produce an organisation object;
- d) creating a cube from said planning data repository;
- e) creating a plan from said cube, thereby assigning ownership; and
- f) binding said organisation object to said plan created from a planning data repository, thereby creating a delegation object;

and the using step comprises the following steps:

For each contributing manager or contributor as identified by said organisation object:

- g) delegating said sub-plan by a superior manager, who may be a plan manager or contributing manager, to a delegated contributing manager or contributor;
- h) incorporating changes generated by said delegated contributing manager or contributor to data within said plan thereby creating a proposal;
- i) passing said proposal to said superior manager using said delegation object to ensure validity of said proposal; and
- j) accepting or rejecting by said superior manager of said proposal, the accepting of said proposal being followed by the steps of including said proposal in said superior manager's proposal and the rejecting of said proposal being followed by the step of sending said proposal back to said delegated contributing manager or contributor for further consideration;

9. The method of claim 2 wherein the delegating step f) in the using step is replaced by the step of delegating one or more said sub-plans by a superior manager, who, knowing which of at least one user groups are to be involved, arranges for said sub-plans to be directly made available to those user groups and their delegated contributing managers or a contributors, without reference to the directly controlling superior managers of said user groups, thereby causing the distribution of work to be carried out without involving one or more levels of the management hierarchy.

10. A computer-based system for the improvement of business planning procedures, including a planning data repository with a fact table, one or more related dimension tables, and relationships for accessing data from the fact table through the related dimension tables, the system comprising:

means to model the organisation comprising:

- a) means for defining one or more dimensions describing the structure of an enterprise;
- b) means for defining one or more user classes;
- c) means for mapping said user classes to the levels in the structures identified by said one or more dimensions to produce an organisation object;
- d) means for creating a cube from said planning data repository;
- e) means for creating a plan from said cube, thereby assigning ownership; and
- f) means for binding said organisation object to said plan created from a planning data repository, thereby creating a delegation object;

and means to use the model created by the modeling means comprising:

- g) means for delegating said plan by a superior manager, who may be a plan manager or contributing manager, to said delegated contributing manager or contributor;
- h) means for incorporating changes generated by said contributing manager or contributor to data within said plan thereby creating a proposal;

- i) means for passing said changed proposal to said superior manager using said delegation object to ensure validity of said proposal; and
- j) means for accepting or rejecting by said superior manager of said proposal, the means for accepting of said proposal being comprised of means for including said proposal in said superior manager's proposal and the means for rejecting of said proposal comprising means for sending said proposal back to said delegated contributing manager or contributor for further consideration;

11. A computer program product for the improvement of business planning procedures, including a planning data repository with a fact table, one or more related dimension tables, and relationships for accessing data from the fact table through the related dimension tables, the product comprising a computer-readable storage medium having computer-readable program code means embodied in it, said computer readable program code means comprising:

computer readable program code means to model the organisation comprising:

- a) computer readable program code means for defining one or more dimensions describing the structure of an enterprise;
- b) computer readable program code means for defining one or more user classes;
- c) computer readable program code means for mapping said user classes to the levels in the structures identified by said one or more dimensions to produce an organisation object;
- d) computer readable program code means for creating a cube from said planning data repository;
- e) computer readable program code means for creating a plan from said cube, thereby assigning ownership; and
- f) computer readable program code means for binding said organisation object to said plan created from a planning data repository, thereby creating a delegation object;

and computer readable program code means to use the model created by the computer readable program code modeling means, comprising:

- g) computer readable program code means for delegating said plan by a superior manager, who may be a plan manager or contributing manager, to said delegated contributing manager or contributor;
- h) computer readable program code means for incorporating changes generated by said contributing manager or contributor to data within said plan thereby creating a proposal;
- i) computer readable program code means for passing said changed proposal to said superior manager using said delegation object to ensure validity of said proposal; and
- j) computer readable program code means for accepting or rejecting by said superior manager of said proposal, the computer readable program code means for accepting of said proposal being comprised of computer readable program code means for including said proposal in said superior manager's proposal and the computer readable program code means for rejecting of said proposal comprising computer readable program code means for sending said proposal back to said delegated contributing manager or contributor for further consideration;

12. An apparatus for the improvement of business planning procedures, comprising a computer having a data storage device coupled thereto, wherein the data storage device stores a relational database and one or more computer programs for the implementation of a relational database and adjunct functions, including a planning data repository with a fact table, one or more related dimension tables, and relationships for accessing data from the fact table through the related dimension tables, said computer and said computer programs comprising;

means for modelling the organization, comprising:

- a) means for defining one or more dimensions describing the structure of an enterprise;
- b) means for defining one or more user classes;

- c) means for mapping said user classes to the levels in the structures identified by said one or more dimensions to produce an organisation object;
- d) means for creating a cube from said planning data repository;
- e) means for creating a plan from said cube, thereby assigning ownership; and
- f) means for binding said organisation object to said plan created from a planning data repository, thereby creating a delegation object;

and means for using the model created by the modeling means, comprising:

- g) means for delegating said plan by a superior manager, who may be a plan manager or contributing manager, to a delegated contributing manager or contributor;
- h) means for incorporating changes generated by said delegated contributing manager or contributor to data within said plan thereby creating a proposal;
- i) means for passing said changed proposal to said superior manager using said delegation object to ensure validity of said proposal; and
- j) means for accepting or rejecting by said superior manager of said proposal, the means for accepting of said proposal being comprised of means for including said proposal in said superior manager's proposal and the means for rejecting of said proposal being comprised of means for sending said proposal back to said delegated contributing manager or contributor for more consideration.